

Black Business in Quebec: the spirit of entrepreneurship and small business solutions to Black unemployment

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Introduction

This study focuses on the creation of Black Businesses in Quebec as a strategy for employment and social integration. A Black business is any private for profit enterprise that has a Black proprietorship: owned outright by a Black person(s) or in which the majority controlling interest is held by a Black person(s). The paper will limit itself to the start up of small businesses as a solution to chronic unemployment among Blacks in Montreal. The definition of Black is problematic on many dimensions; that of culture, race, identity of parents and grand parents, multiple identity issues, language, religion, place of origin, historical reference. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this paper I shall define Black in accordance with the use of the term in the Canada population census survey. Put simply, it includes those persons that have reported themselves as Black in the Census. That is to say, persons whose responses to the visibility question identified themselves to be of African ethnicity or at least partially of African ethnicity. This measure closely approximates the visible minority definition of Black used for purposes of the Employment Equity Act: a person other than aboriginal people, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-White in color ¹. (Statistics Canada, 1996).

Clearly, this definition may not meet the approval of some individuals' perceptions of themselves, and their ethnicity. Some may even strongly object to being classified as a visible minority, choosing to remain unseen in the "others" category of Canadian from which they may have been plucked. But the paper would have little value if we had no sense of the realities of the people we are talking about or where they are located. The paper therefore looks at Blacks both as a community of interest and as a community of place, Quebec. As a community of interest located in Quebec (and its municipalities) Blacks are entitled to equity under the law, and their rights assured, as are all Canadian Citizens and residents, under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and The Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. However, Blacks in Quebec do not have the same rights as Blacks elsewhere in Canada with respect to the choice of an education in English. This creates employment disadvantages for English speaking Black immigrants. In addition, neither of the two charters guarantees a fair distribution of the

¹ More precisely, in census terms the Black count would consist of, (1) all Black single responses, (2) all Black only multiple responses (for example, some one who checked of Black as a category but also included Afro-Canadian, African-American, or some other description that strongly justify classifying the person as Black), (3) all persons who checked off Black and White or Black and Caucasian, but who did not indicate membership in any other racial group (i.e. multiple visible minorities were excluded).

education and other goods and services that citizens may consider necessary to satisfy their needs. Goods and services must be produced. How much of these goods and services are produced and who gets them depends on the amount of social and physical capital stock that is accumulated and who owns that stock.

In Quebec and Canada the distribution of wealth and access to opportunity, is determined partly by historical circumstances of class, position, and inheritance. (John Porter 1965, *Capital*, by K. Marks, 1959) and by "the invisible hand" of the market system. Unfortunately, the free enterprise market system does not take into consideration the prior distribution of wealth and ownership; the effect of discrimination and racism on factor employment and payments, or the distortions it may cause in consumption and investment patterns. Nor can it take into consideration the impact of wealth concentration and on the speed with which justice is done, suffering is made to be endured, or poverty eliminated. Quite simply the market fails because the assumptions that underpin its operations frequently do not reflect the realities.

The market does not take into consideration the need for community and all its social conventions, and the social capital that is needed to sustain a healthy welcoming environment and a sense of trust and belonging. The market struggles to co-exist with arts and culture; and when it does so successfully, art frequently becomes a civilization attribute that characterizes the wealthy and distinguishes them from "the others". It is not surprising that in racially and culturally diversified capitalist countries like Canada and the USA that the market compensates Blacks, Asiatic peoples, first nation peoples, and immigrants at a lower rate compared to Whites in general and the well established classes of the population. This paper advances the argument that in Canada Blacks can reduce their economic disadvantages and improve their social status by taking more risks in the market, by investing their entrepreneurial skills and cultural capital in market ventures, and by building social and commercial networks in which its members work together.

To seriously engage in the construction of Black community social and commercial infrastructures, we must know who we are, how many we are and where we are located. The following section addresses these issues.

Early research in counting Blacks in and Canada

Many of us have been using census based variables to measure the size of the Black community of Canada, to determine its concentrations in Metropolitan regions across the Country; and present information on its participation rates in the labor market, the income distribution of households; and its contribution to growth in the commercial sectors of the economy (i.e., its rate of savings and investment activity).

The following are some of the works in question:

1. A preliminary Report on the Socio-economic position of Blacks in the Canadian Regional Settings as reflected in the 1971 Census Data, by Professor David W. McKinney Jr. of University of Guelph, 1978.

2. Demographic Analysis of Black Communities in the Montreal Census Metropolitan Area (based on the 1986) Census, by Professor C.S. Bayne et al, 1989.
3. Socio-Demographic Profile of Black Communities in the Montreal Census Metropolitan Area. Using data from the 1960, 1971, 1981, and 1986 censuses. By Professor C.S. Bayne, Concordia University, January 18, 1990.
4. Diversity Mobility and Change: the Dynamics of Black Communities in Canada (based on the 1991 Census) by Professor James Torczyner, McGill Consortium for Ethnicity and Strategic Social Planning (MCESSP), 1997.
5. The Evolution of the Black Community of Montreal: Change and Challenge, by Prof James Torczyner, MCESSP, 2001.
6. The Shaping of Toronto's Black Identity: A Demographic Analysis of the Black Community in Toronto and Regions, 2003. (Based on the 1996 Census).

Apart from these studies Statistics Canada and various other government agencies provide us with updates on the demographics and employment status of visible minorities to meet the requirements of equity and multiculturalism in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We shall draw on these sources of data to support the socio-economic rationale for our main thesis.

Black leaders and historians in Canada had for years been saying that Canada is a racist country and that Blacks were marginalized by racist social attitudes and economic policies. (Reverent Dr. William P. Oliver, Professor Clarence Bayne, Dr. Dorothy Wills, Professor Dan Hill, Dr. Howard McCurdy, Dr. Leo Bertley, Mr. Belmore "Buddy" Daye, Dr. Carrie Best, Mr. Joe Drummond, to name a few) But it took the book "Blacks in Canada" (1971) by the celebrated Yale historian Robin Winks to add weight to their voices, and open up the field for academic study and attention. Winks described discrimination against Blacks in Quebec as benevolent neglect, and racism in Canada as attitudes learned from the USA. Later James Walker, University of Waterloo, introduced to Black Canadian historical studies an analysis (the concept of the "Color line") that explains racism in economic and social terms (Walker, J.W St.G., 1980) that closely resembled one of the central tenets Dr. Eric Williams's thesis on Capitalism and Slavery. Williams (1944) convincingly argued that economics, not a change in Whites' perceptions of Blacks, was the reason for the abolishment of slavery. (Williams, Eric, 1970). Walker (1980, p77-126) used a similar labor embodied theory of the value of Blacks as capital stock (the "color line") to explain cyclical fluctuations in the employment status of Blacks in Canada. The notion that Blacks are valued for the labor embodied in them; not their humanness, spiritual, intellectual and creative capabilities was inherent to Canadian thinking well into the late twentieth century. Thus demand for Blacks were high in the labor market when the work was of an unpleasant and menial type that Whites did not want and in low demand during times when the depressed nature of the market put them into direct competitive conflict with the poor classes of Whites. The credibility of the scholars cited above was significant, but there was a lack of data that would support these historical studies beyond anecdotal evidence.

Bayne and McKinley are among the few Black scholars throughout the eighties that realized the importance of using census data to establish the social and economic inequity of Blacks. In an unpublished paper written in 1971, Bayne commented on the need for more accurate data about the Black population in Montreal when he declared that there were more Blacks partying in West Indian dances on any Saturday night in Montreal than the total Black population reported by the 1960 census of Canada. Clearly there was a need for improvements in the surveying of the Black population in Canada. Both Bayne and McKinley established the fact that there was a serious underestimation of the Black populations in Canada. (See Bayne et al, 1990). Moreover, in the early seventies it had become clear to Blacks that if they could not be found and counted then they would be forever subjected to benevolent neglect in a rapidly modernizing Canada committed to building a more open society that is non-racist, non-sexist, and more pluralistic. This opened the gate for Statistics Canada to apply improved techniques in the identification, and numeration, to report on a wide variety of demographic variables and attributes respecting various groups. The works cited above helped to bring to the attention of scholars, community leaders, policy makers and decision makers quantitative data and a greater awareness of the analysis of social patterns and economic trends associated with the exclusion of Blacks from the social, economic and democratic processes of the Canadian Society. With more reliable data one could conduct test and analyses to determine the existence or presence of certain attitudes and practices in the mainstream populations and institutions that have a negative or marginalizing effect on segments of the population. Important characteristics of the population could be measured and recorded: size, place of birth, age distribution, geographic distribution, education and language skills; economic characteristics; birth place of specific populations; migration patterns and integration conditions. The importance of these variables and their effects on social and economic planning and policy varies from province to province; and municipality to municipality. Improved data collection and availability from Statistics has made it possible to understand more precisely the social and economic dynamics affecting Blacks and other ethnic groups in Canada and its regions.

The Economic Setting

In any society, people express a wide variety of needs that are either satisfied by public sector provisions or private market provisions. Needs are satisfied through the consumption of goods and services, which are produced by the creative transformation of the factors of production: land, labor services, capital services (physical and social), knowledge and the creative capabilities of the population. In market oriented societies, people must be employed productively in order to earn a share of the goods and services they need to satisfy their needs. Differences in the productivity of labor units (skills differentials) and systemic and other biases in employment practices may cause a distribution of goods and services in the population that is socially undesirable (i.e., unacceptable number of persons below the poverty line). In societies, such as Canada, that promotes social justice, there usually is in place income redistribution policies and other regulations that govern employment practices. To accommodate the growth in population and the consequent growth in needs and the demand for new goods and services to satisfy these needs, there must be a growth in employment (increased

income). This can only take place if there is an increase in capital stock of both the physical and social capital type. For this to happen there must be sufficient savings and investment taking place. The problem is that saving and market investment does not always take place at a rate consistent with the requirements of population growth and the growth in aggregate demand needed to ensure full employment. Correcting for this may require government interventions in the market. When diverse cultural and ethnic populations characterize the society and are sustained by successive streams of different immigrants, unemployment may be disproportionately absorbed by certain ethnic groups more than the others. This may be due to historical biases in the labor market, such as the "color line" referred to above or the way in which capital stock is accumulated. For example, when economic growth comes from small family business start ups which are predominantly in non-Black communities, there may be a tendency for these new businesses to hire only in their communities. Against this background we will present a portrait of the Black community and its participation in the labor market, its rate of entry into the competitive market as a supplier of goods and services (i.e., its contributions to capital capacity accumulation and employment), and its access to local, provincial and national networks.

Economic Portrait of the Black Community

Population

The size of the Black population(s) in Quebec as per Census 2001 was 152, 195. This represents a growth of 3.7% over the 1996 census count and 3.2 percent over the 1991 census count. The vast majority of Blacks live in Montreal, 139, 300 or 91.5 % at the 2001 census. Montreal was home to the second highest Black population and proportion of Blacks in Canada, after Toronto. Blacks represented 30% of all visible minorities in Montreal; Arabs/West Asians represents 17%. The economic market size of the Black population in Montreal is therefore significant.

Spatial distribution of the population

There is no evidence of Black or ethnic ghettos in Montreal. Maps published by statistics Canada , Demography Division; the Bureau des relations interculturelles, City of Montreal (1996), and Bayne et al (1989) show that Blacks and visible minority live side by side with the mainstream populations in all of Montréal arrondissements and boroughs. There are some notable concentrations of Blacks that have importance for Black business location and local Black community development. Using data for the 1996 census, the McGill Consortium (2001) identified ten neighborhoods of importance in studying Black community and commercial life. These communities accounted for approximately 70, 000 Black persons, 57% of the Black population of Montreal in 1996. First, it is important to note that the French speaking populations tend to be concentrated in the North Eastern neighborhoods of the Island, St Michel, Riviere-des-Prairies and Montreal North being the most densely populated. Almost one in every five persons living in St Michel is Black. The English speaking populations tend to be concentrated in the Western more Anglophone neighborhoods. In 1996, 22,000 Blacks lived in Cote-des-Neiges, NDG/Montreal West, La Salle and Little Burgundy/St Henri. Other areas of

importance from a point of view of population concentration and business location are Saint-Laurent, Parc Extension, and Dollard des Ormeaux. (Bayne et al, 1989). Blacks in the Western parts of the City constitute about 18% of all Blacks living in the City (122, 320 as per MCESSP estimates, 2001). These population concentrations suggest that a population base exists for the start up of certain culture derived products. But in fact the opportunity for Black investment, extends beyond the consumption needs of Black populations to “cross over markets”; and should be responsive to opportunities for entrepreneurial participation in the general open market (information technology, bioinformatics, pharmaco-economics, business start-ups, management of regulations, telecommunications, the performing arts, biotechnologies, aerospace, pharmaceuticals and chemicals, etc).

Business, language, education and employment

The official language of business in Montreal is by law (Bill 101). French. Thus, the language a person speaks or mother tongue can be a deterrent to educational attainment and ultimately employment in Quebec (Mc Andrew, M., 2005). A comparison of the Census statistics for 1996(MCESSP, 2001, pp23-25) and 2001(Government of Quebec, P35) show a significant improvement in capabilities of Blacks in Montreal to speak and work in French. In 1996, 1.8% of Blacks in Montreal spoke neither French nor English. Today that is down to 1.2%. Only 35.8%, approximately one in three Blacks, were bilingual in 1996 as compared to 42% currently. According to recent Government reports, 42.9 percent of the Black population speaks French only compared to 53.8 percent for the population as a whole. 42% speak both English and French as compared with 40.8 per cent for the population as a whole. 13.9 percent speak only English as compared with 4.6 percent of the population as a whole. 1.2 percent speaks neither French nor English compared with less than 1 % for the population as a whole. (Government of Quebec, Appendix 8, P35.) The Black communities, especially the English speaking Black communities, are some what at a disadvantage in terms of access to the labor market or doing business directly with the public, but Anglophone Blacks are closing the gap. . However, Blacks seem to have a slight advantage in being able to do business in both languages. This advantage is likely to increase in the future as the children of immigrant Blacks function in English at home but attend French schools (Elementary and High). However, this would depend on the educational attainment performance of Anglophone Blacks in French schools(secondary) which are according to recent research considered to be rather perturbing(McAndrew, M. 2005).

While entrepreneurship and the reasons for starting a business may not necessarily be dependent on the level of education of the person/family (necessity, opportunity, profit); the rate of employment or participation in the labor force has been proven to be highly correlated with the level of education a person has. The Montreal labor force grew by 164.3 thousand over 1991 to 1.7 million at 200, a 10.8% increase. Almost all of the growth in that decade reflected a strong demand for skilled workers. Over 80 percent of the increase came from university-level occupations, with one third in information technology occupations (Statistic Canada, 2003). To be employed one needs to either hire one's skills out to those in the market for those skills. Or as an alternative, one needs to

self employ/become a net employer. Has the Black community been keeping pace with the requirements for employability in the Montreal Labor Market?

Education and employment Profile of the Montreal Black population aged 15 years and over

The history of Blacks from the mid sixties in Canada has been one in which Blacks were considered to be valuable almost only for the labor embodied in them. This is well documented in Robin Winks work "The Blacks in Canada" (1971) and Walker's "A History of Blacks in Canada" (1980). Walker believes that Canadians have had an image of Blacks that has generally translated into "a place for Blacks" in Canadian society and economy. He described this persisting attitude as the "color line", the notion of Blacks being a reservoir of cheap labor, but not to be taken seriously in the shaping of a society and an economy. As a result, Blacks have faced constant restriction and limitations in society and the labor market that often are reflect in economic terms, as "a place for Blacks" in the labor market. This is as true in Montreal, as it is in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Vancouver, in any Metropolitan area of Canada. Census data going back to the eighties show Blacks to be disproportionately represented among the unemployed of this country. While at the same time their educational status seemed to have paralleled that of their White counter parts. The 1981 Census reported unemployment among the Caribbean populations to be 15.1 percent or twice the average for Quebec labor force. For the Haitian populations 15 years and over it was 20.6 percent or approximately three times the Quebec level. (Bayne, 1990, Table 6, p28-9). In general, Blacks were concentrated in the low paying textile and leather good industries, nurse's aids and orderlies, and related health services, clerical jobs in the service sector, the taxi industry. They were almost absent from the high paying unionized trades, and under represented in the high paying managerial sectors. (Bayne, 1990, p27). Fully two decades later the situation has not changed significantly with respect to overall Black participation in the workforce. At Census 2001 the size of the Black communities in Quebec 15 years and over was 109 140. The census shows that participation rate in the labor force was 66% for the Black population compared with 64.2% for the total population. 54.8 percent of the Black potential workforce was employed, compared with 58.9 percent for the total potential labor force. 17.1 % of the Black workforce was unemployed compared with 8.2 percent for the total Quebec labor force (Government of Quebec, 2003, p35). Black unemployment continues to be twice as high compared with the provincial level. Yet the educational attainment of the Black population 15 years and older seem to have improved over what it was at 1981. The McGill Consortium (2001, p38) reported that the percentage of Black aged 15 and over were attending school full-time in 1996 was almost twice that of non-Blacks(28% for Blacks and 12.6 % for non Blacks). The finding was consistent for all age groups in the working population. The Consortium found that on the whole, the educational attainment levels of Blacks in Montreal are reasonably similar to those of all Montréal. The Census 2001 shows that the educational attainment of Blacks aged 15 years and over in Quebec to be equivalent or better than that for the total Quebec population 15 years and over. 15% of Blacks have attained college certificates or diplomas compared to 14.5 % for the Total population. 14.7% of Blacks 15 years or older have attained university degrees compared with 14% for the Quebec population. Blacks outperform the rest of the population in the attainment of masters and doctorates. (Government of Quebec, 2003, Appendix 6, p33). Moreover with respect to

the distribution of fields of studies Blacks are comparable with the Quebec population as a whole in the age group 15 and over ². One exception is in the field of applied science technologies and trades where 6.6% percent of Blacks have chosen this field of study as compared with 8.6 percent for the population as a whole. This may suggest that Blacks need to catch up in a discipline which shows significant potential demand growth in the market. Notwithstanding these achievements, the McGill consortium states that Blacks in Montreal are far less likely to be employed than non-Blacks even when they have comparable levels of education. It found that unemployment among Black university graduates were three times higher when compared with non-Black community graduates. That strikingly, the level of unemployment for Black university graduates was identical to that of non-Blacks who had not completed high school in 1996 (MCESSP, 1997, 2001).

How do we break the cycle of unemployment? Education is not enough. We are as educated; yet we do not get the jobs in Quebec. Quebec government has recognized the debilitating nature of racism and exclusion on the development of Blacks in Quebec and has responded by inviting the stakeholders to discuss possible solutions. (The Yolande James Commission. Government of Quebec, 2005). One would think that according to some of the reasons given for entrepreneurial activity (opportunity, necessity, and predisposition) that partly out of opportunity (ethnic niches), necessity (exclusion from the labor market), and the Black communities would be very active in business start ups. Let's examine what exist.

A scan of Black businesses in Montreal

The McGill Consortium based in its analysis of the 1986 Census income and job-classifications for Blacks in Montreal, states that Blacks are less likely than other populations to start a business. A small convenience sample of Black businesses in census metropolitan area of Montreal seems to support that conclusion. There seems to be little visible evidence of significant new businesses turning up in advertising in the local community papers, event programs, and local directories. Of the 50 or so businesses we have been able to identify, only four of them may hire fifty or more persons: one in the real estate and construction sector; one in the electronic engineering technologies; one in trucking, and one in agriculture (food industry). The others are very small firms concentrated in hair styling and ethnic products, ethnic restaurants, and the dance and entertainment business. These businesses hire five or less persons. The persons employed are family, friends, and mostly the owner(s) of the business. The total number of persons employed probably by these 50 businesses probably does not exceed 400. There seem to be no new Black businesses in the key Quebec growth sectors of genomics, biotechnology, communication technologies, and pharmaceutical technologies. The sample may not be adequately reflecting the professional self employed, especially in transportation (trucking), computer services, and renovations in the construction sector, electricians, and plumbers. Clearly there is a need for greater initiatives taken to stimulate

² It should be noted that the Canada census count makes no distinction between persons who did their secondary, college and university in Canada; and immigrants that did their education outside Canada. Their results therefore do not unambiguously reflect education attainment in Canadian schools.

Black contributions to the creation of businesses and the provision of employment. In fact, it's imperative when one considers the factors influencing economic growth and employment in Quebec. Self interest demands it.

Business start-ups, growth and employment in Quebec

In Quebec, most businesses with paid employees are very small. According to a CIFB report (Quebec Small Business Primer, Pohlmann, C. 1998), about 77 percent of Quebec businesses employ fewer than five persons; and 96 percent of all businesses have fewer than 50 employees. In 1995, small-and-medium-sized firms accounted for almost 62 percent of total private sector employment. At the same time the participation of large firms (those with 500 or more employees) in the labor force dropped from a 45% share to 38% share of the labor force of Quebec. Also in the nineties self-employment accounted for all the net job growth in Quebec, increasing from 13 percent to 16 percent of all jobs in Quebec (Pohlmann, C., 1998 pp1-4). The message is clear. Large corporations are accounting for a diminishing share of growth in the labor force; there is a systemic bias in large corporation that have a negative impact on the hiring of Blacks. Small family businesses tend to hire family and friends. Self employment is on the rise. It would seem evident that the Black community has to turn to business start ups as a strategy for reducing unemployment in the Black community and for the development of the community as a whole. More Black businesses are needed. Moreover there is a desire and capacity in the Montreal Black community among young educated Blacks, and Blacks in the age group 35 to 45 who have accumulated experience in the Quebec labor force to set up and run their own businesses.

Self-Employment Programs

The Black Community Economic Development Program: creating and managing sustainable enterprises in the Black community (BCED) was launched as a two-year pilot project in April 2003. It is now in its third year of operation. The program represents a collaboration between seven Black community organizations which constitute the Committee for Sustainable Economic Development in the Black Community (CSEDBC) and the EIDMC. Its goal is to encourage persons from the Black Community aged 18 to 45 with a minimum of College education to participate more fully in the creation and management of successful businesses.

In the three years that the program has been run, the majority of entrepreneurs that completed the program and started a business had a diploma from a college, or vocational institution and / or a university degree. They have set up or will set up an average of 5 businesses per year in the following areas: graphic design, fashion design, massage and athletic therapy, ethnic gift items, wireless network communications, online data information services, print and web communications, esthetics, daycare, dance school, catering, and import / export.

Most of the help available in Montreal for entrepreneurs, outside of university formal business courses, is oriented to the creation of a business plan. Various self employment programs such as those offered by YES Montreal and SAJE, direct the entrepreneur to

professional and other sources of assistance, depending on the problem that needs to be addressed. Most often, there is no integrative and holistic approach to the way help is delivered, nor attention paid to the stage in the process that the entrepreneur is at. In almost no situation is the assistance culture specific. So the cultural issues or family issues are not addressed as part of the process of developing the business plan.

The EIDMC has collaborated with the (CSEDBC) to deliver the BCED program. The approach is to combine small and family business theory and research findings with community development approaches. It is integrative across all the phases in the organizational design and planning process. It is interactive with the individual's learning needs and information needs. It is not restricted by class room pedagogy with its weekly lecture and examination schedules. It tends to be a one-on-one approach and specific to the nature of the project, and where it leads. Most of the work is accomplished by the participant outside the strict setting of a class room. Some participants have actually left the country to investigate markets for supplies or materials. We introduce the participant to the market as it is in the real world where the assumptions of how things work are tested and revised until an approach or strategy that works better is arrived at. We do not abandon theory, but we try to get the trainee to modify and adapt theory to the needs of the project.

In many instances the management theories, operations management, marketing theories, forecasting methods, financial theory are developed for application in large corporations; not for small scale operations that may have their start up in the kitchen or basement of the household. This size of operation requires innovative rethinking of what one normally expects should work. Since this is not school, the only certificate or measure of success is the launching of a business that is sustainable.

Once the Entrepreneur launches the business the EIDMC works with Community organizations like the Black Studies Centre to provide incubation services as their resources permit. They also partner with the Dobson Centre for Knowledge-based entrepreneurs at the JMSB to provide ongoing technical support and business counseling to entrepreneurs who set up businesses.

The Black Community expects very concrete results from the BCED program. These include the following:

- At least 10 persons will complete the training program every year; from these, 4 to 6 businesses will be successfully launched
- An increased participation of minorities in the economy
- A reduced risk of lending faced by banks and other venture capitalists
- A reduced failure rate of minority business ventures by increasing the possibilities to succeed through training
- A significant increase in the Black Community economic base.
- A network of Black businesses that interact with each other.
- An increase in social capital in the Black communities.

Moreover if, as happened in the first three years of the BCED program 5 persons, launch businesses each year, over five years that would see a minimum of 25 new businesses created in the Black Community. This will have a significant positive multiplier impact not only in the Black Community but also on the Canadian economy. It is not unlikely that 25 new business startups will result in 20 successful small businesses. A modest five employees per business would generate about 100 new direct jobs in the Black community over five years. This is a significant short-term contribution that through the multiplier effect will have a major longer-term impact on the community. It is not unreasonable to think of an exponential expansion in business start ups from the Black community resulting from this demonstration project and the general Quebec initiatives in promoting entrepreneurship as an alternative career.

Summary and Conclusions

The Black leadership and NGOs have to shift their rhetoric and programs to the promotion of small business and self employment as a career option. The Quebec government has embarked on an economic development policy that is rooted in the promotion of the spirit of entrepreneurship among Quebecers: developing "a culture of entrepreneurship". This is exactly what the Black Community Economic Development Program is attempting to do, and some more. This program is doing more than just motivating Blacks to enter the market in search of profits. It strives to implant and create a network of support and encouragement for other black businesses: to create a brotherhood based on community pride and a sense of community. This sort of brotherhood is known to exist in some ethnic communities, i.e., the Japanese and Chinese settlers of the USA. (Light, I. 1972).

It is hoped that in creating such a social capital net work that it will contribute to the start up of new enterprises that will generate through a multiplier process new employment for Blacks. However, such ethnic specific outcomes are not automatic. Dyer and Ross in an Article entitled "The Entrepreneur in the Community" warns of the mix blessings of social capital networks and family businesses. Borrowing from the work of Davis and Taguiri(1989) and Professor Bakr Ibrahim(2003) on small family businesses, they argue that ethic and family businesses can act as much as a constraint as an opportunity. Strong links with family members and between co-ethnics can play a contradictory role in the pursuit of business activities. Community networks can provide helpful resources, but they can come with problems that interfere with good business practice: the repression of healthy competition, and the support on inefficiency. In creating the business development plan and strategies for sustaining the business, all these issues must be sorted out, built into the plan of action and worked out as part of the process leading to start up, and follow through into the immediate post start up period.

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